

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Brigid Callahan, and I write as a concerned citizen of the State of Connecticut. Students of private, special-education institutions would be directly and negatively impacted by the proposed bill HB 54477. I stand in firm opposition to this piece of legislation because it places financial restrictions on private providers of education, organizations who receive some of the most challenged and challenging student cases in Connecticut's continuum of care. Passage of such legislation and the financial restrictions that would follow would, quite simply, fail students who are most in-need. Private education organizations would be unable to provide for students who require more intensive care due to the simple fact of being unable to afford it. The goal of the state in the short-term may be to save fiscally, however, this bill would ultimately thwart this objective in the long-term. If realized, HB 54477 would lead to fewer private providers of special-needs services, fewer and less viable placement options, and ultimately, increased state spending on individuals with special-needs over 21 years of age who were unable to gain the necessary skills and independence that a properly funded institution (pursing rigorous and complete implementation of an IEP) could have afforded them. Private providers of education are not one-size-fits-all solutions because the clients we serve have such vastly varying needs, both within and among organizations. Trying to restrict all private providers to the same financial mold means leaving out students who may need more intensive care. Mahatma Ghandi once said, "The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats it's most vulnerable members." Don't let Connecticut be judged poorly. I urge you, for students with special-needs across the state, do not pass HB 54477. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Brigid Callahan